

TUKARAM



Prabhakar
Khanolkar

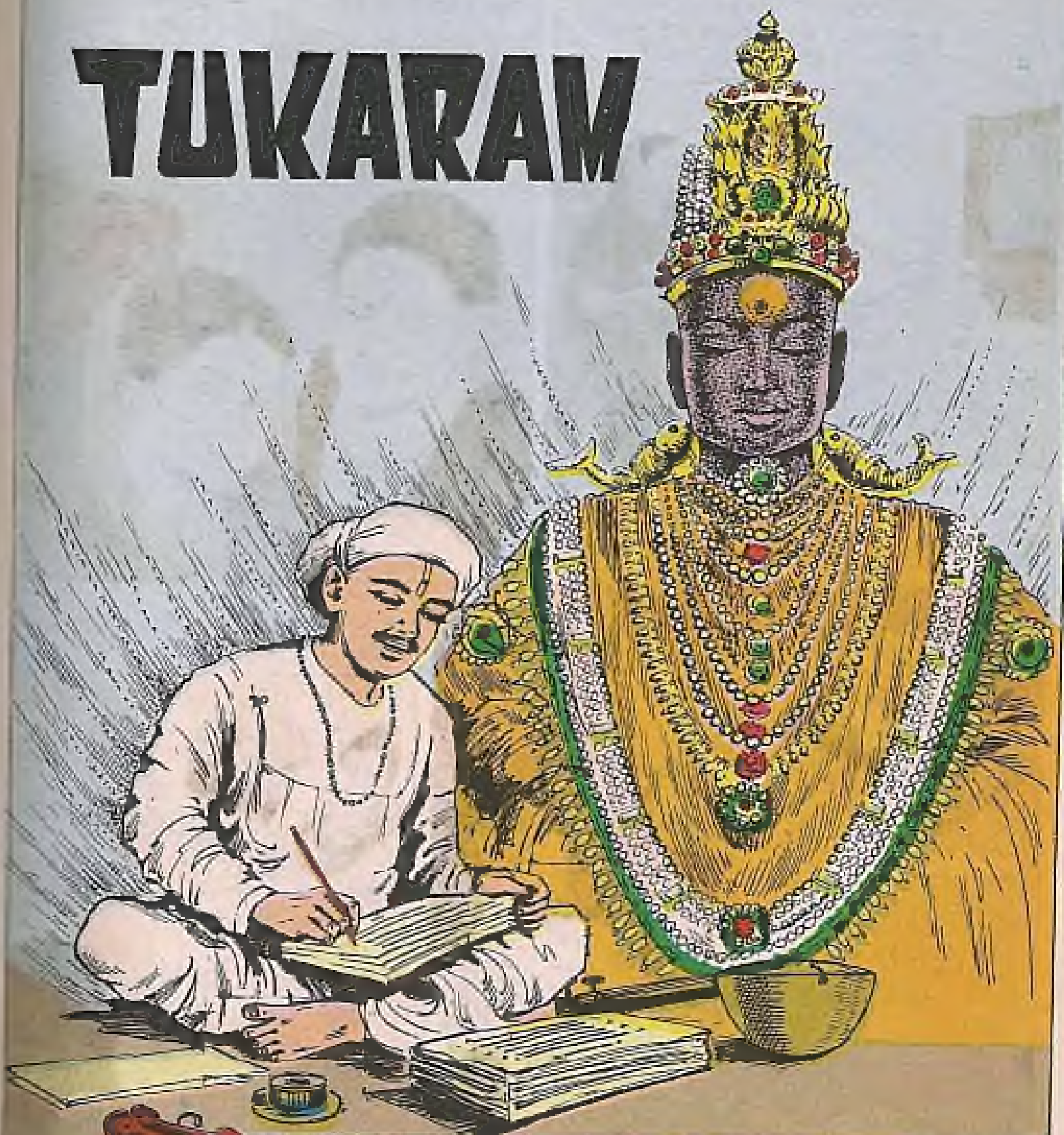
Maharashtra has an enviable legacy of mystics and saints. But few of them unlike the saints elsewhere were from the socially elite. Quite the contrary. In affluence, if not in caste or occupation, they were all of humble origin. Tukaram, whom many consider the crown of this mystic tradition, was no exception. He was a commoner in every sense of the word. Neither was he a Brahman nor was he a scholar. He was in fact a shop-keeper for much of the early part of his life. It is his very commonness, which makes him the model for all of us who would embark on the path of spiritual achievements. It is inspiring even as it is challenging.

The path to spiritual bliss was by no means an easy one for Tukaram. He had to fight hard and long against human frailties like pride, anger and desire. His allies were sustained effort and unflinching faith.

Perhaps the only native asset that Tukaram started with was a streak of poetry. His poetry though simple is grand in its simplicity. Not for him, the intellectualisms of metaphysical poets. His Abhangs have the simplicity and the grandeur of a mountain-peak. That is why his poems are an integral part of living Maharashtra.

We have based our story on popular legends and not on any one particular version.

TUKARAM



TUKARAM WAS THE SON OF BOLHOBA, A FARMER BY BIRTH, WHO HAD CHOSEN THE PROFESSION OF A GROCER. BOLHOBA AND HIS WIFE KANABAI LIVED IN DEHU, A VILLAGE NEAR POONA. THEY MADE REGULAR PILGRIMAGES TO PANDHARPUR TO PRAY FOR THE ONE BLESSING THEY LACKED IN LIFE - A CHILD.



KANA, IT IS GOOD TO BE ALIVE. OUR LIFE IS SIMPLE, YET FULL OF PEACE.

YES, MY LORD. BUT... BUT IF ONLY WE HAD A CHILD.



BE PATIENT, KANA. OUR PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED.

YES... I KNOW... BUT MY YEARNING SOMETIMES BECOMES TOO MUCH FOR ME.

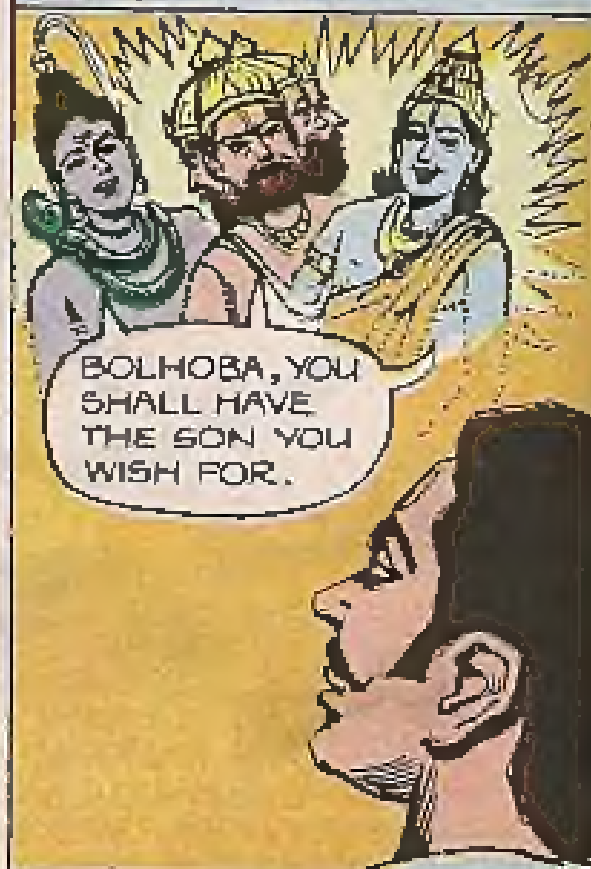
THAT NIGHT, BOLHOBA'S FAITH WAS REWARDED. SHIVA, BRAHMA, AND VISHNU CAME TO HIM IN A VISION.



YOU AND YOUR WIFE HAVE PLEASED US BY YOUR DEVOTION. WE HAVE COME TO GRANT YOU A BOON. WHAT WILL YOU HAVE?

MY LORD, IF IT PLEASES YOU, A SON! A SON WHO WILL BE A COMFORT TO US IN OUR OLD AGE.

THE DEVAS WERE SILENT FOR A WHILE. THEN -



BOLHOBA, YOU SHALL HAVE THE SON YOU WISH FOR.

BOLHOBA COULD NOT CONTROL HIS EXCITEMENT.

KANA! KANA! WAKE UP!
WE HAVE BEEN
PROMISED A SON!
SHIVA, VISHNU, BRAHMA...

UH? UH?
WHAT? A SON?
HOW? SHIVA?
VISHNU?
BRAHMA?



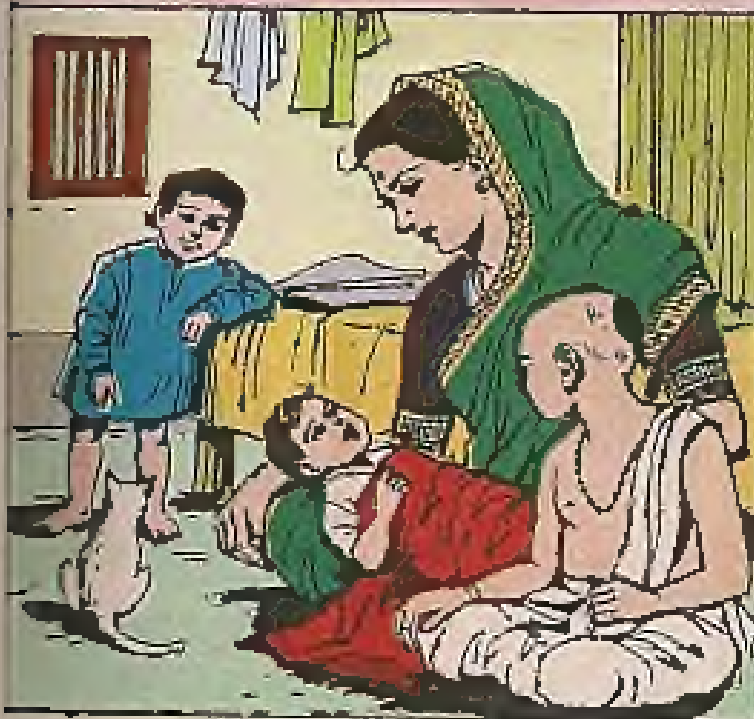
WHEN KANA WAS FULLY AWAKE,
BOLHOBA TOLD HER IN DETAIL
ABOUT THE VISION.

MY LORD, AT LAST
OUR DESIRE WILL
BE FULFILLED.



I HAD NO
DOUBT IT
WOULD BE,
KANA.

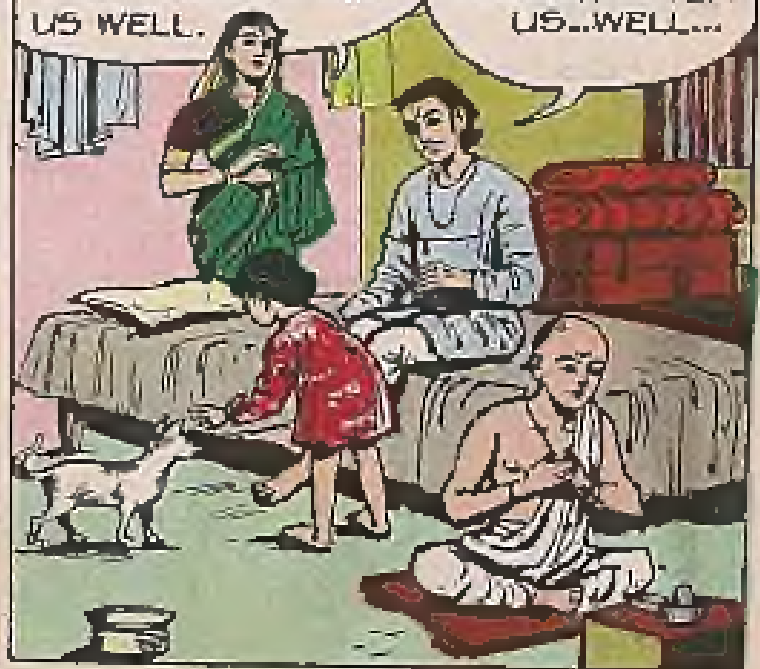
AS EACH OF THE THREE GODS HAD
PROMISED, KANA IN DUE COURSE
WAS BLESSED WITH THREE SONS—
SAVAJI THE GIFT OF SHIVA,
TUKARAM THE GIFT OF VISHNU, AND
KANHOBA THE GIFT OF BRAHMA.



THE BABIES SOON GREW UP INTO
STRONG BOYS.

WE ARE FORTUNATE.
SAVAJI, TUKARAM
AND KANHOBA ARE
GOOD BOYS AND
WILL LOOK AFTER
US WELL.

BEING THE
GIFT OF THE
GODS, THE BOYS
ARE ALL GOOD.
BUT ABOUT
LOOKING AFTER
US...WELL...





ONE DAY, YEARS LATER, BOLHOBA CALLED HIS ELDEST SON TO HIM.

SAVAJI, I AM GROWING OLD AND NEED HELP WITH MY BUSINESS. WILL YOU COME TO THE SHOP WITH ME EVERY DAY?

DEAR FATHER, FORGIVE ME... BUT BUSINESS DOES NOT INTEREST ME. I WOULD LIKE TO BE A SANYASI.

BOLHOBA HAD EXPECTED THIS.

I UNDERSTAND, SAVAJI, I UNDERSTAND. NEVER MIND. YOU MAY GO WITH MY BLESSINGS. I SHALL ASK TUKARAM TO HELP ME.

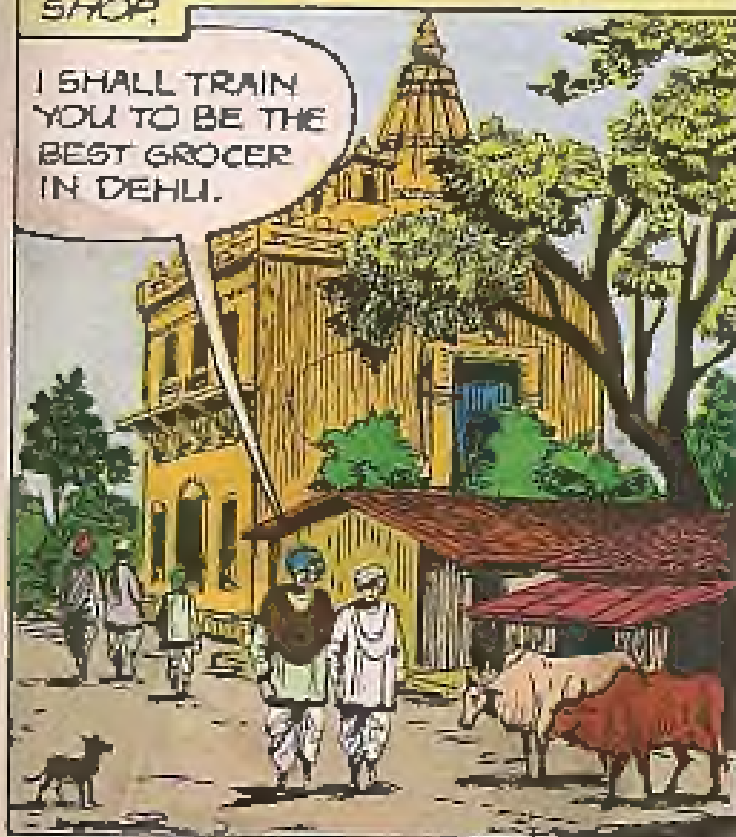
BOLHOBA SENT FOR TUKARAM.

TUKARAM, I NEED HELP AT THE SHOP. WILL YOU COME?

I WILL, FATHER. WHEN SHOULD I BEGIN?

BOLHOBA WAS HAPPY. ALONG WITH
TUKARAM, HE SET OUT FOR THE
SHOP.

I SHALL TRAIN
YOU TO BE THE
BEST GROCER
IN DEHLI.



TUKARAM SOON MASTERED THE
TRADE.

TUKARAM IS
VERY HELPFUL
TO ME.

ISN'T IT TIME WE GOT
HIM MARRIED?
RAKHMABAI IS A
GOOD GIRL AND
HER FAMILY
WILL AGREE
TO THE
MATCH.



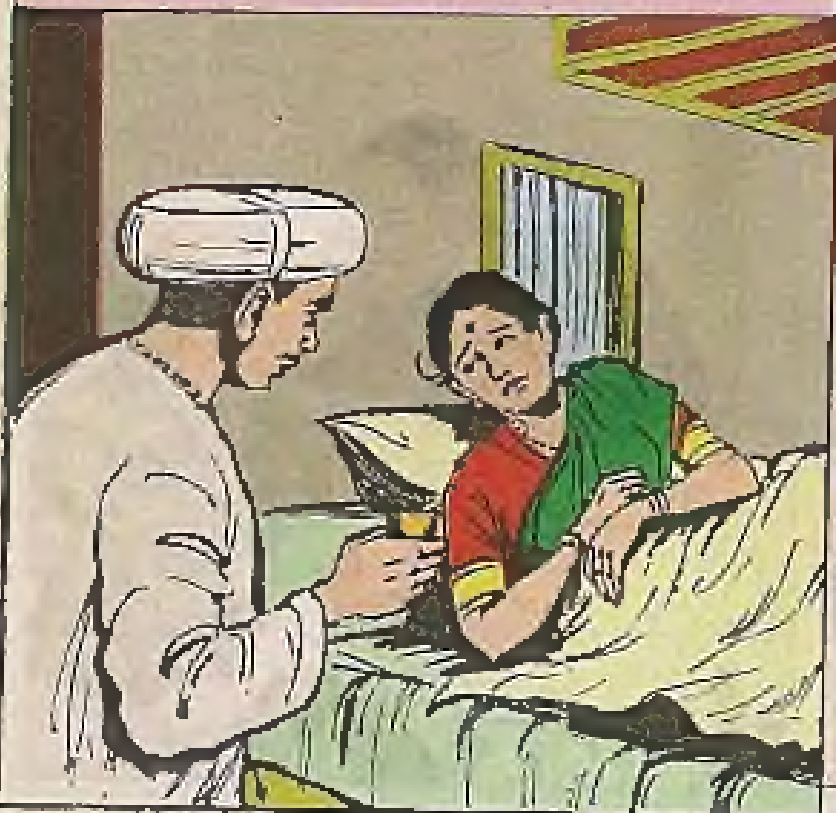
TUKARAM WAS MARRIED TO
RAKHMABAI.



THEY HAD ONE SON WHOM
THEY CALLED MAHADEV.



BUT RAKHMABAI, UNFORTUNATELY SUFFERED FROM ASTHMA AND WOULD BE BED-RIDDEN FOR MONTHS.



KANABAI WAS ANXIOUS FOR HER SON.

MANAGING BOTH, THE BUSINESS AND HOUSEHOLD AFFAIRS WILL PROVE TOO MUCH FOR TUKARAM. POOR RAKHMA IS ALWAYS ILL.



THAT'S TRUE, BUT WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

WHY DON'T WE GET HIM MARRIED AGAIN? WHEN WE ARE DEAD AND GONE THERE WILL BE SOMEONE TO LOOK AFTER TUKARAM, AS WELL AS RAKHMA AND MAHADEV.

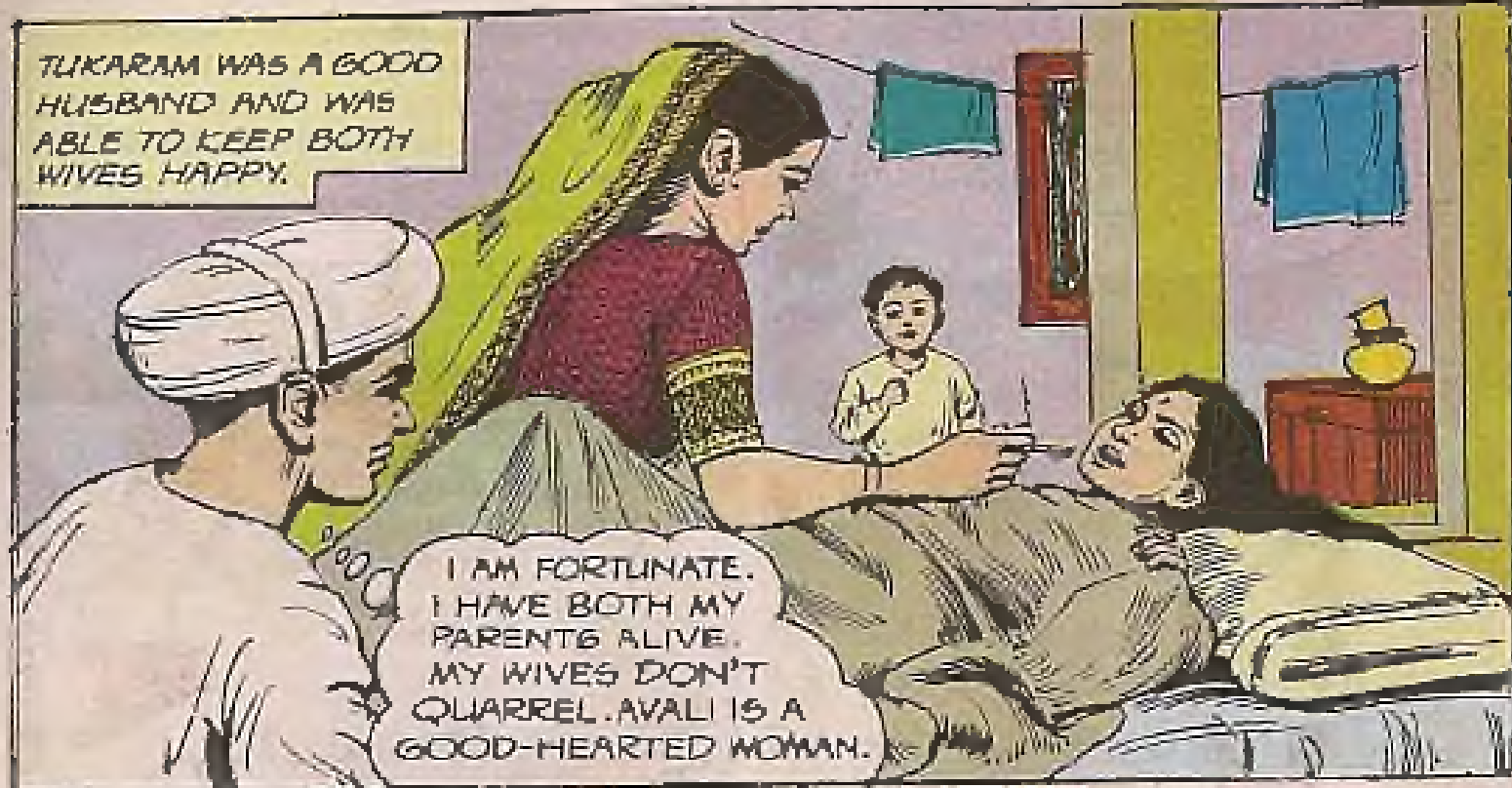
YOU ARE RIGHT.



TUKARAM WAS MARRIED ONCE AGAIN, THIS TIME TO AVALIBAI, THE DAUGHTER OF A WEALTHY BANKER FROM POONA.

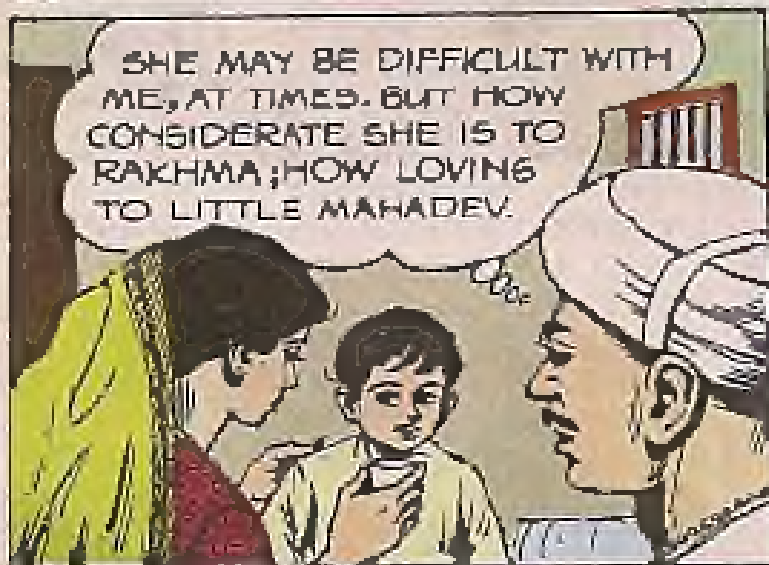


TUKARAM WAS A GOOD HUSBAND AND WAS ABLE TO KEEP BOTH WIVES HAPPY.



I AM FORTUNATE. I HAVE BOTH MY PARENTS ALIVE. MY WIVES DON'T QUARREL. AVALI IS A GOOD-HEARTED WOMAN.

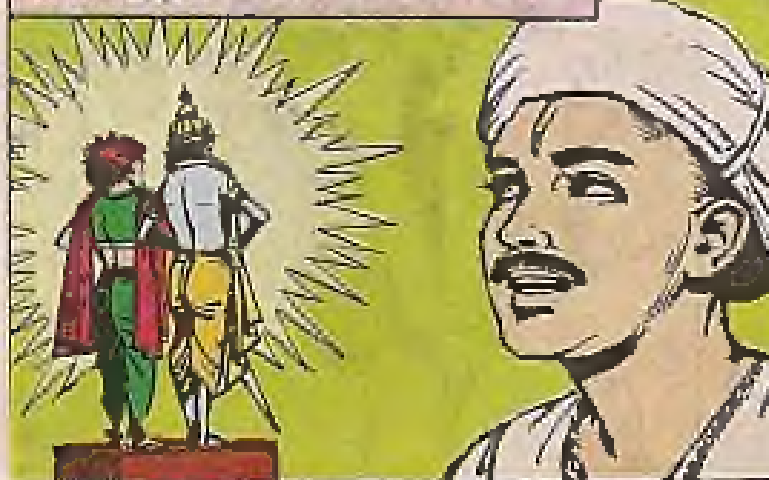
SHE MAY BE DIFFICULT WITH ME, AT TIMES. BUT HOW CONSIDERATE SHE IS TO RAKHMA; HOW LOVING TO LITTLE MAHADEV.



BUT TUKARAM'S HAPPINESS WAS SHORT-LIVED. WHEN HE WAS BARELY EIGHTEEN, BOTH HIS PARENTS DIED.



TUKARAM IN HIS GRIEF TURNED FOR SOLACE TO HIS FAVOURITE DEITIES, VITHOBA AND RAKHMAJI.



HE BEGAN NEGLECTING HIS BUSINESS. UNSCRUPULOUS PERSONS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS.



TUKARAM DOES NOT KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON. WE MUST TALK TO HIM.

POOR MAN. HOW HE TRUSTS PEOPLE.

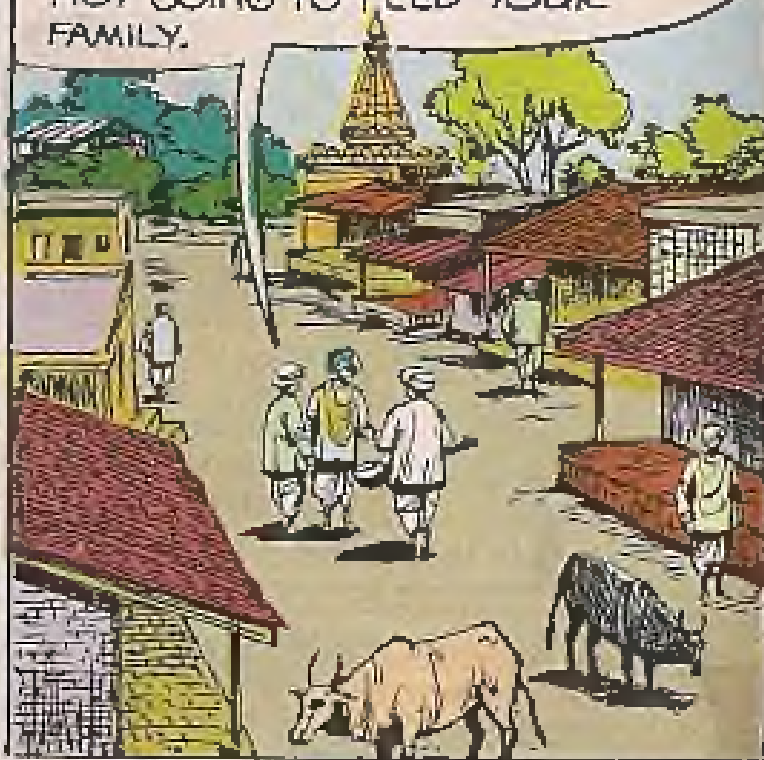
SOON THE ONCE PROSPEROUS FAMILY WAS DEEP IN DEBT.

BE PATIENT. WE WILL RETURN YOUR MONEY AS SOON AS WE CAN.



HIS FRIENDS BEGAN TO COUNSEL HIM.

TUKARAM, YOU ARE A HOUSEHOLDER. RELIGION IS NECESSARY BUT MERE WORSHIP OF VITHOBA IS NOT GOING TO FEED YOUR FAMILY.



YOU ARE WRONG. VITHOBA WILL CERTAINLY COME TO MY AID IF THE NEED ARISES. RIGHT NOW IT ISN'T NECESSARY.



THAT'S TRUE. BUT SHOULDN'T YOU MAKE YOUR OWN EFFORTS TOO?

ALL RIGHT. IF YOU INSIST. WHAT SHOULD I DO?



WE ARE GOING TO A FAR-OFF
MARKET TO BUY GRAIN WHICH
WE WILL SELL AT DEHLI WILL
YOU WORK WITH US ON THE DEAL?

YES, IF YOU
WANT ME TO



TUKARAM WENT WITH THE
TRADERS. THEY BOUGHT THE
GRAIN AND SET OUT ON THE
HOMeward JOURNEY, THROUGH
THE JUNGLES.



ON THE WAY, TOWARDS EVENING,
TUKARAM BROUGHT HIS HORSE
TO A HALT AND DISMOUNTED.

WHAT IS THE
MATTER?

IT'S TIME

FOR ME
TO GO
HOME



HE WAS A HONEST MAN (X) HE WAS THE
 1. HE WAS A HONEST MAN (X) HE WAS
 2. HE WAS

HE IS A FOOL. COME ON, LET US
 LEAVE HIM WITH HIS PRAYERS
 AND HIS GRAIN TO THE
 MERCY OF THE JUNGLE
 OUR FAMILIES HAVE TO
 EAT.



WHEN TUKARAM FINISHED HIS
 PRAYERS, IT WAS VERY DARK.

MY FRIENDS
 HELP
 (X) ME



THERE WAS A... AND IT THUNDERED AND
 THE RAIN CAME DOWN IN TORRENTS.

HIS HORSE REARED IN FEAR AND
 THE HEAVY SACKS OF GRAIN FELL
 OFF ITS BACK.



FROM THE DEPTHS OF HIS HEART

I HAVE

DOING ALL ALONE IN THE

I AM A TRADER MY
FRIENDS DESERTED
ME WHILE I WAS LOST
IN PRAYER.

YOUR HORSE

LEAD
YOU OUT.

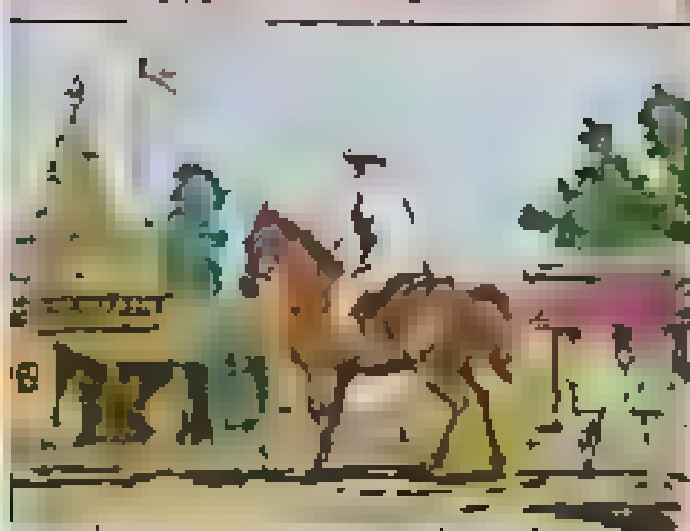
IT IS NOBLE

HAD NOT SEEN HIS FACE.

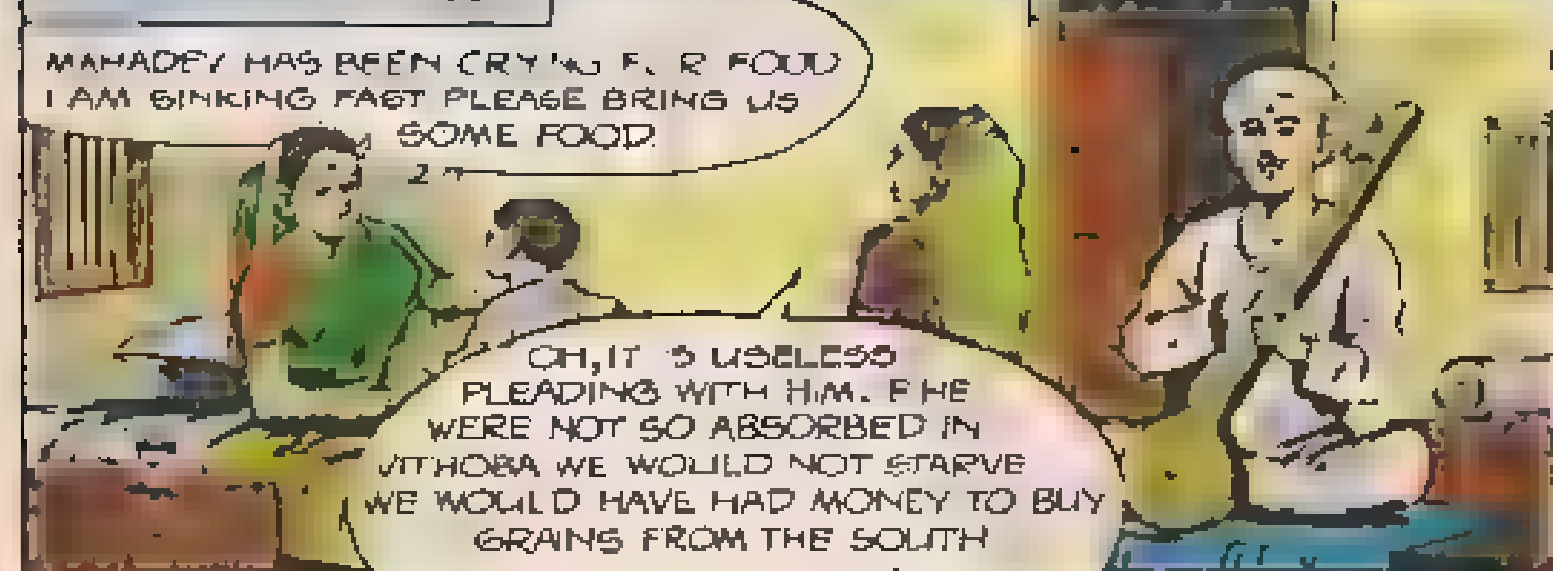


BUT REMEMBER I HAD SAID THAT
AMTIN - AMTIN, THE OTHER HAD
A ...

THE ... MY ...
H ...
THAN ...

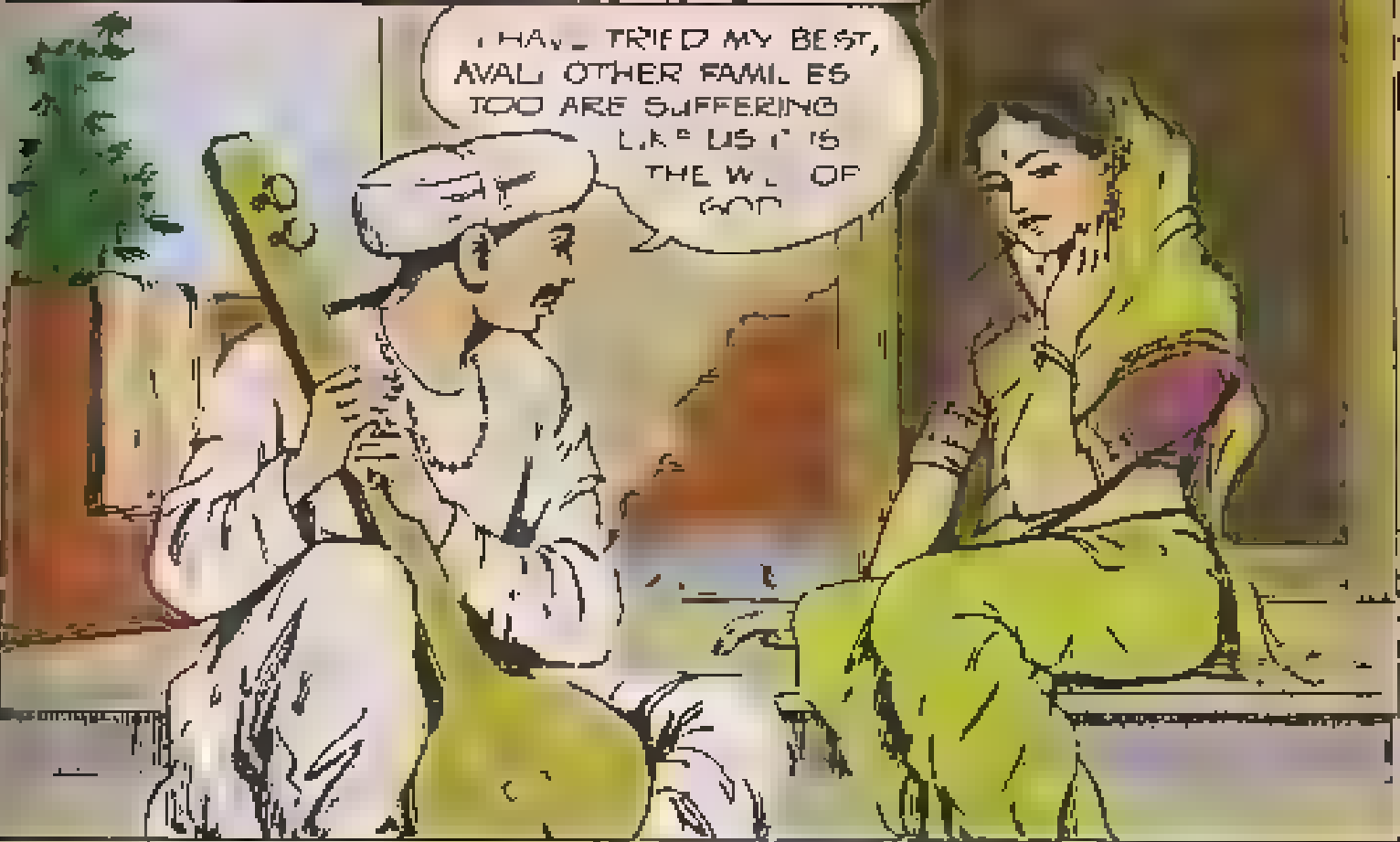


THE NEXT YEAR THE RAIN FAILED AND A TERRIBLE Famine HIT THE ...
... GRAINS ...



IRAKHAM BORE THE CHARGES CALMLY LATER .

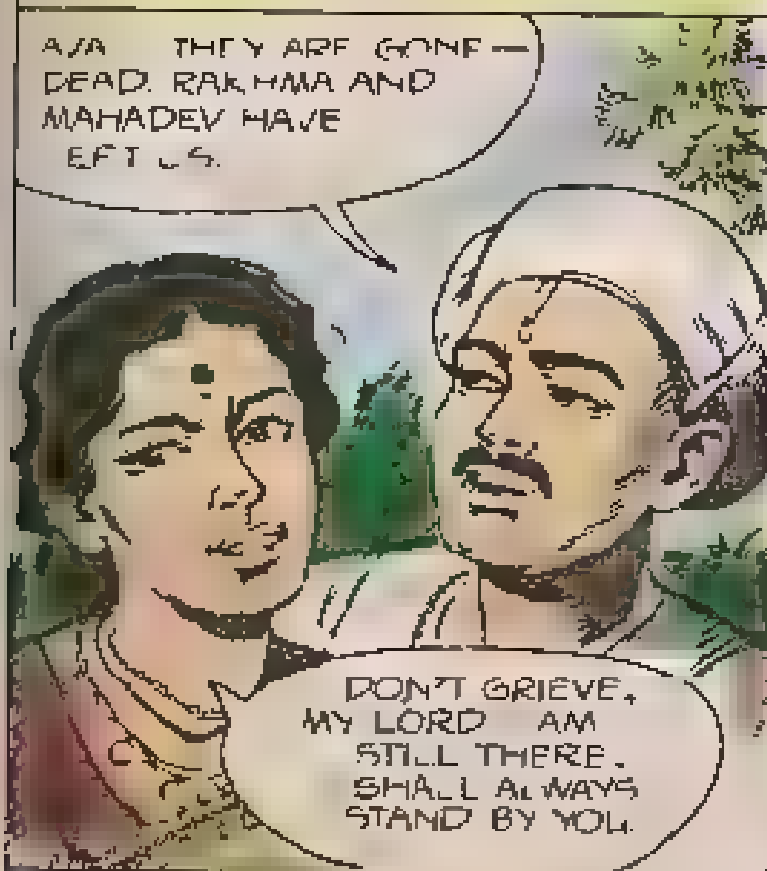
I HAVE TRIED MY BEST,
AVAL OTHER FAMILIES
TOO ARE SUFFERING
LIKE US IT IS
THE WILL OF
GOD



THE AILING RAKHMA AND MAHADEV
COULD NOT HOLD OUT FOR LONG

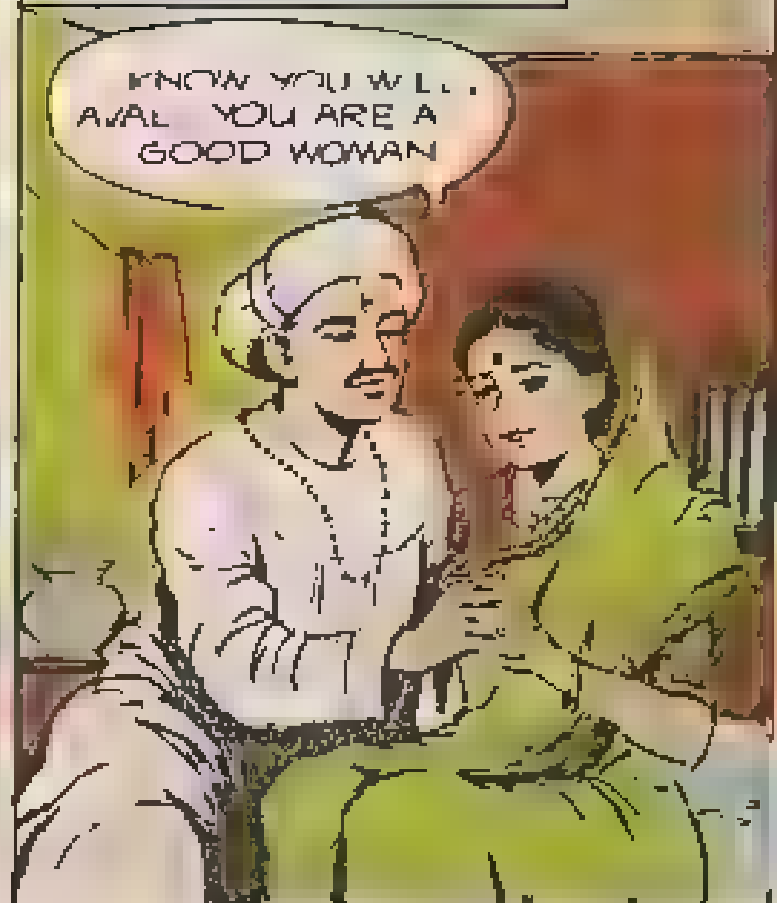
AJA THEY ARE GONE —
DEAD. RAKHMA AND
MAHADEV HAVE
LEFT US.

DON'T GRIEVE,
MY LORD AM
STILL THERE.
SHALL ALWAYS
STAND BY YOU.



TULARAM WAS TOUCHED

KNOW YOU WILL,
AVAL YOU ARE A
GOOD WOMAN



THE NEXT YEAR THE RAINE CAME AND
WITH IT FRESH HOPE FOR THE END OF
THE FAMINE ONE DAY

DEAR HUSBAND, IT IS
EVERY MAN'S DUTY TO
EARN A GOOD LIVING
AND LEAD A COMFORT-
ABLE LIFE



THE CROPS ARE GOOD THIS
YEAR AND EXTRA HANDS ARE
NEEDED IN THE FIELDS WHY
DON'T YOU
WORK FOR
A FARMER?

I WILL TRY, AVALI



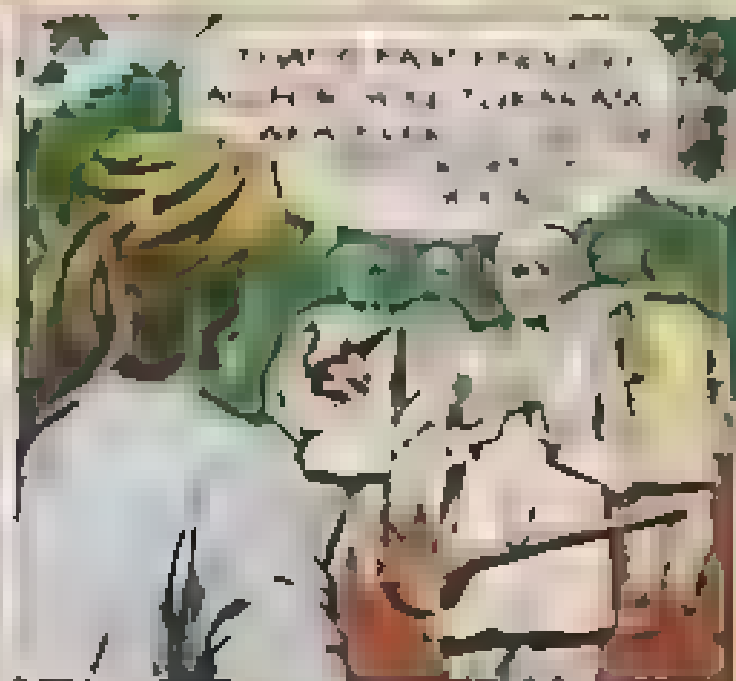
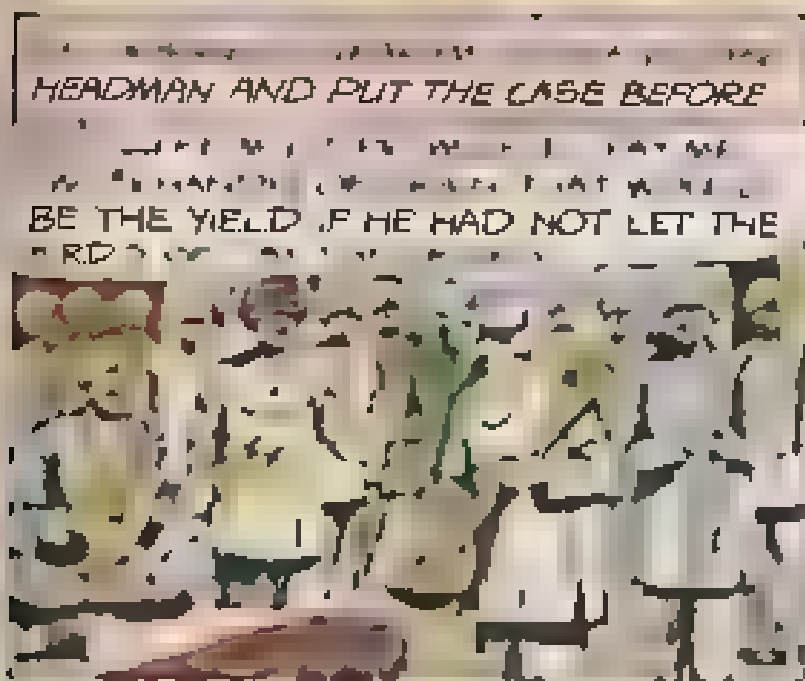
SO TUKARAM STARTED WORKING FOR A FARMER

THE CROPS ARE
ALMOST READY
FOR HARVESTING
IT WILL BE YOUR
DUTY TO SHOO
AWAY THE
BIRDS FROM
THE
FIELDS



BUT ALAS! TUKARAM WHILE LOOKING AFTER THE CROPS, WIDDELY FEEL
INTO A TRANCE





SO THEY BEGAN TO REAP THE CROPS.

AVALI, EVEN IF WE HAD LEFT THIS FOR THE BIRDS WE WOULD NOT HAVE STARVED. VITHOBA WOULD HAVE LOOKED AFTER US.

PLEASED WITH TUKARAM'S FAITH, VITHOBA DECIDED TO REWARD HIM



WHEN THE PADDY WAS REAPED, AVALI AND TUKARAM WERE ASTONISHED.

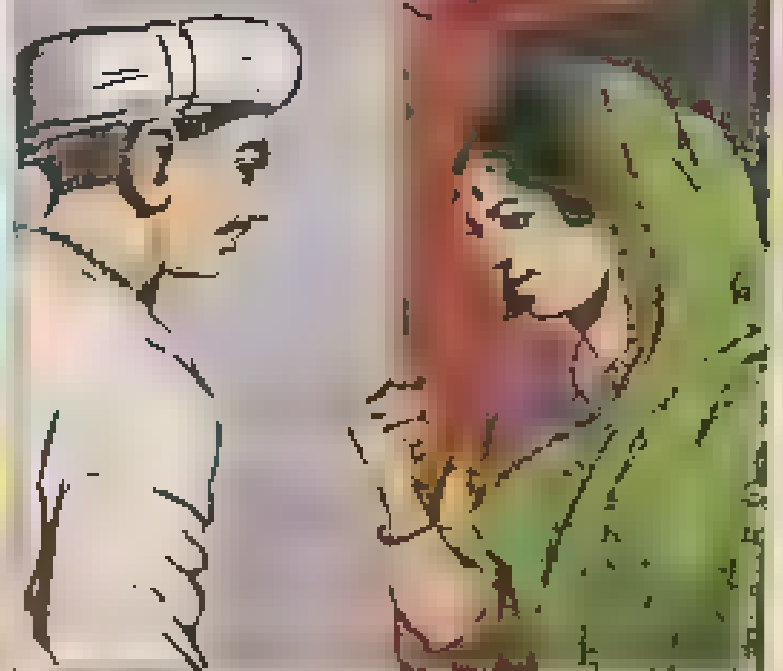
THERE ARE 18 KHANDIS OF GRAIN IN ALL, MY LORD. THE FARMER WAS A FOOL!

THIS IS A MIRACLE VITHOBA! 18 KHANDIS NINE TIMES THE QUANTITY THE FARMER EXPECTED.



AVALI AND TUKARAM ENJOYING THEIR WINDFALL

LET US SELL THIS. PAY BACK THE FARMER AND LIVE A LIFE OF EASE WITH WHAT'S LEFT



BUT TUKARAM HAD DIFFERENT IDEAS

THE EXTRA BELONGS TO VITHOBA AND TO HIM IT SHALL GO! I SHALL USE THE MONEY TO RESTORE OUR ANCESTRAL TEMPLE OF VITHOBA



AVAL WAS ANGRY SHE RAVED AND RANTED

AT THIS RATE I SHALL NEVER KNOW EASE AM DOOMED TO LIVE THE LIFE OF A LABOURER. VITHOBA, YOU ARE TO BLAME, IT IS YOUR FAULT



BUT AFTER A WHILE SHE CALMED DOWN AND SIGHED HEAVILY

WE ... HAVE PROMISED TO STAND BY MY HUSBAND.



I'LL WRITE TO FATHER AND ASK HIM FOR A LOAN OF TWO HUNDRED RUPEES. THAT SHOULD ENABLE MY HUSBAND TO START HIS TRADING AFRESH



A FEW DAYS LATER THE MONEY (AMF) AVAI WENT UP TO TUKARAM

DEAR HUSBAND, USE THIS MONEY
TO BUY SOME GOODS AND START
YOUR TRADE
AGAIN.



TUKARAM STARTED OUT WITH EVERY INTENTION OF PLEASING AVAI
BUT ON THE WAY-

WHAT'S THAT
COMMOTION?



A GROUP OF PEOPLE WERE REPAIRING A MEEK BRAHMAN

PAY UP OR ELSE.

AH! PLEASE
LEAVE
ME LET ME
EXPLAIN



TUKARAM PAID THE BAKSHASH

THE MERCHANTS STOPPED

STOP! STOP THIS AT ONCE,
I SAY WHAT HAS HE
DONE TO DESERVE
THIS!

HE MESSED
AROUND AND
REFUSED TO PAY

THAT'S NOT
TRUE WANT
TO PAY ALL
I CAN'T

TUKARAM TURNED TO THE
CROWD AND

HOW MUCH
DOES HE
OWE YOU?

THAT
HIMSELF
RELATES
IN ALL

TUKARAM DID NOT
HESITATE FOR A
MOMENT

HERE, TAKE THIS AND
LEAVE HIM ALONE

YOU HAVE SAVED
MY LIFE I AM
GRATEFUL TO YOU

DO NOT BE GRATEFUL TO ME
IT WAS LORD VITHOBA WHO
CAME TO YOUR AID HE GUIDED
ME TO YOU I HEREBY
OFFER THANKS
TO HIM

AND TUKARAM RETURNED HOME AVAL WAS EAGERLY WAITING FOR HIM



WHEN AVAL HEARD WHAT HE HAD DONE SHE CURSED HIM AND CREATED SUCH A FURORE THAT



ALL THE VILLAGERS CAME OUT



HING.

HE IS A MADMAN! LET US
GIVE HIM HIS DUL



PLACED HIM ON A DONKEY,
AND PARADED HIM IN THE



THE MISERABLE TUKARAM SOMEHOW
MANAGED TO SHAKE OFF HIS

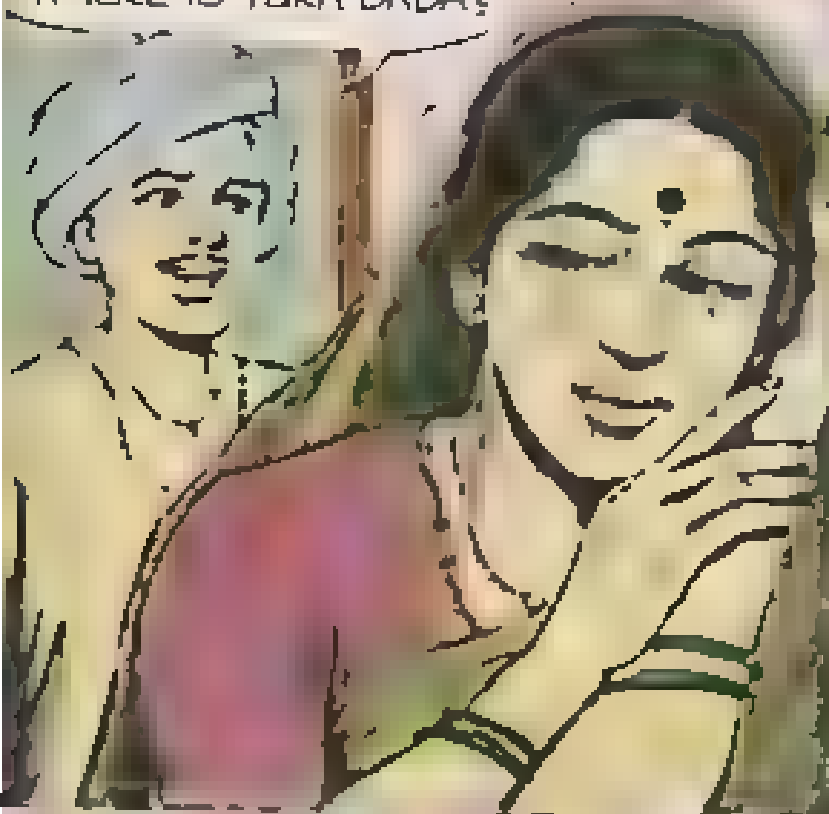
THE HILLS. THEY WILL
NOT FOLLOW ME THERE



ONCE IN THE SAFETY OF THE
HILLS TUKARAM SPENT HIS DAYS
IN MEDITATION AND IN PRAYER



WHY ARE YOU WEEPING?
WHERE IS TUKA DADA?



DEAR BROTHER, WHAT HAVE
THEY DONE TO YOU? I SHALL
FIND THEM AND



... AS N ... IN ...

TUKARAM

BROTHER, HAVE
COME TO TAKE YOU
BACK HOME

AS W ...
W ...

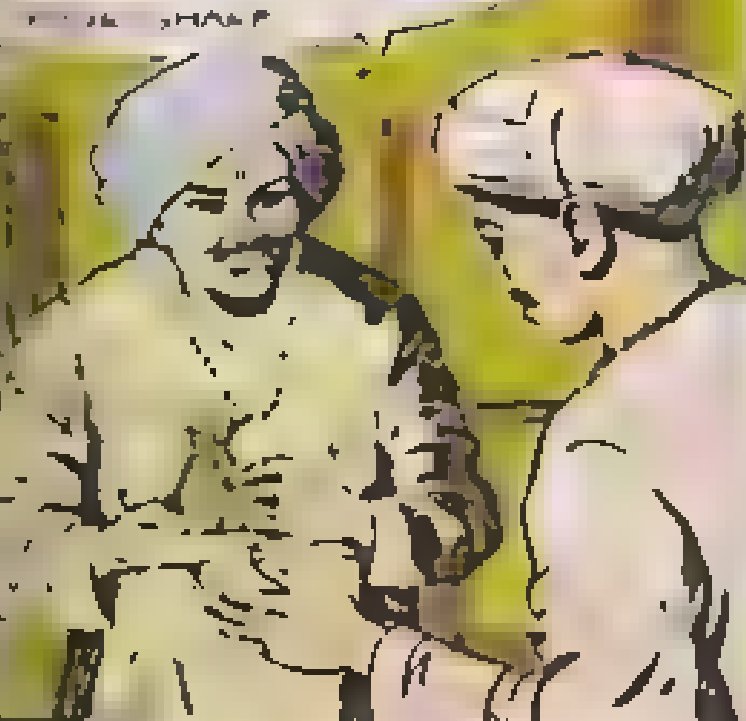


AND TUKARAM FOLLOWED
KANHABA MECHANICALLY



BACK AT DEHLI, KANHABA, A CLEVER
PRACTICAL YOUTH, SOON REVIVED
THE FAMILY BUSINESS AND BECAME
PROSPEROUS

TUKA DADA, YOU ARE NOW
A RICH MAN. HERE IS



TUKARAM WOULD HAVE NOTHING TO
DO WITH WORLDLY MATTERS AND
FLUNG WHAT KANHABA HAD GIVEN
HIM INTO THE RIVER

EVEN KANHABA WILL NOT HAVE
ANY PATIENCE WITH ME NOW
I SHALL RETURN TO THE HILLS.



WAS ON EARTH, HE MADE A VOW TO
WRITE A LAKH OF DEVOTIONAL VERSES.
HE DIED BEFORE HE COULD WRITE
ALL OF THEM YOU, TUKARAM
HAVE MY BLESSINGS

YOU SHALL
HAVE THE
POWER TO
COMPLETE THE
UNFINISHED

HAVE PROMISED TO STAND
BY MY HUSBAND. IF HE WILL
NOT COME TO DEHLI, I SHALL
GO UP TO THE HILLS EACH
DAY AND LOOK AFTER
HIS NEEDS.



WHY DO YOU TORTURE ME? WHY CAN'T YOU BE LIKE ANY NORMAL HUSBAND? PLEASE EAT THE I HAVE BAKED WITH SOME FOOD AND I SHALL BRING IT FOR YOU EVERY DAY.



AND SHE LEFT HER IN THE WOODS LIKE SHE WAS ON THE WAY TO THE HILLS

AH H H E E ! A THORN WILL PULL IT OUT AND WALK ON MY HUSBAND MUST BE HUNGRY



RAHAM WAS SHOCKED WHEN HE SAW THE WOMAN LIKE THIS

NO CANNOT LET YOU SUFFER LIKE THIS FOR ME SHALL RETURN WITH YOU TO DEHU

BUT HE COULD NOT ORDER RE TURN TO THE OR XERY DIFFICULT AND HIS DREAM UNDER 3 JULY

HE IS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER MEN. IT IS BEST THAT HE CHOOSE HIS OWN PATH

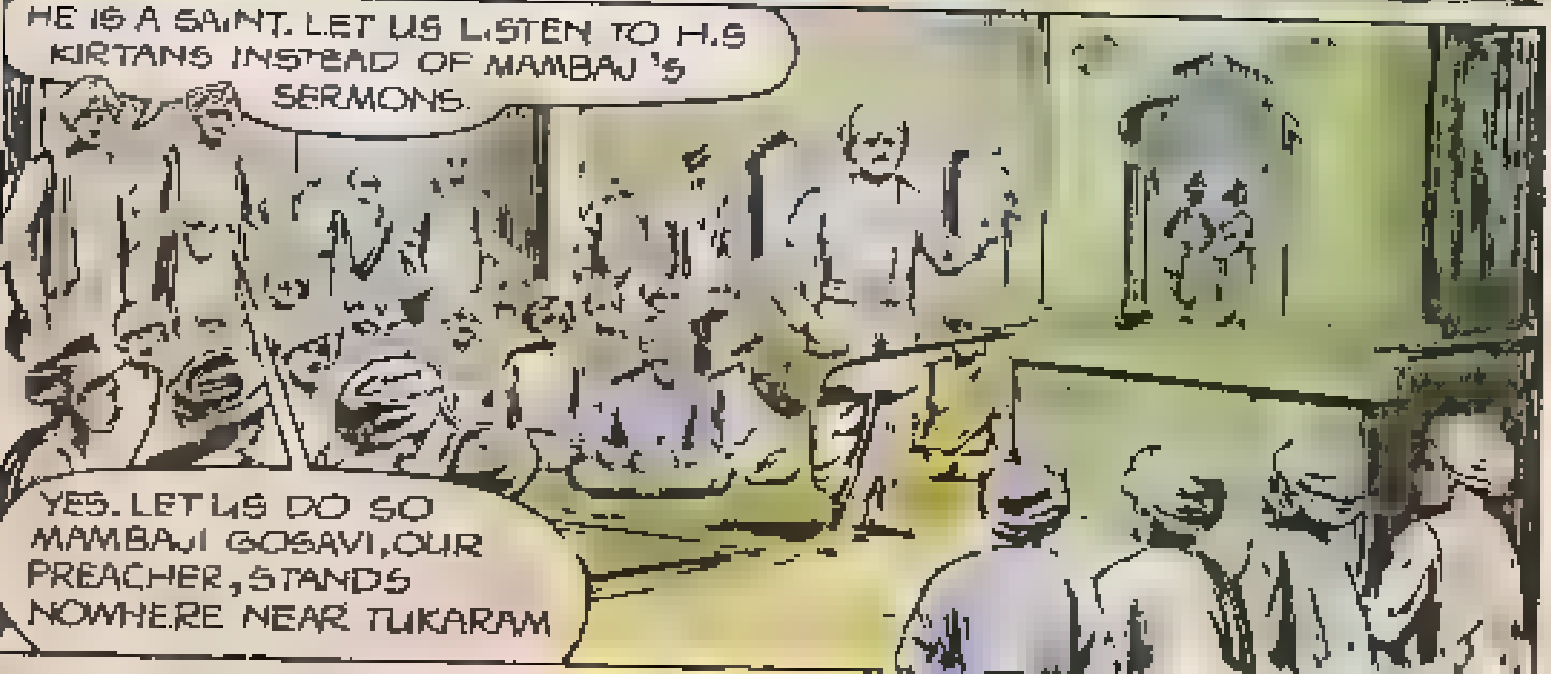


EVERY MORNING TUKARAM WENT TO THE HILLS AND IN SOLITUDE COMPOSED HIS ARRANGS



HE IS A SAINT. LET US LISTEN TO HIS KIRTANS INSTEAD OF MAMBAJI'S SERMONS.

YES. LET US DO SO MAMBAJI GOSAVI, OUR PREACHER, STANDS NOWHERE NEAR TUKARAM

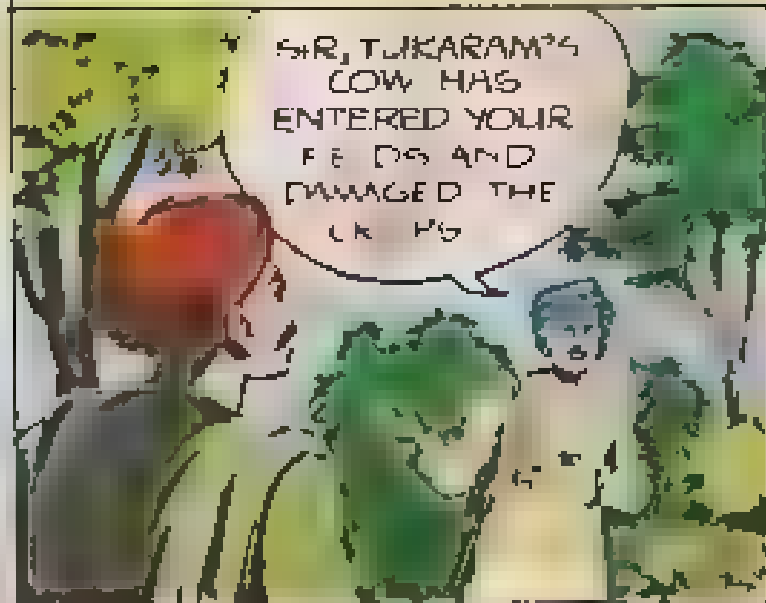


MAMBAJI GEETHED WITH JEALOUSY

EVER SINCE THAT LIPSTART TUKARAM
STARTED HIS KIRTANS MY
EARNINGS HAVE DWINDLED.
MUST TEACH HIM
A LESSON.



HE DID NOT HAVE TO WAIT LONG
FOR AN OPPORTUNITY ONE DAY



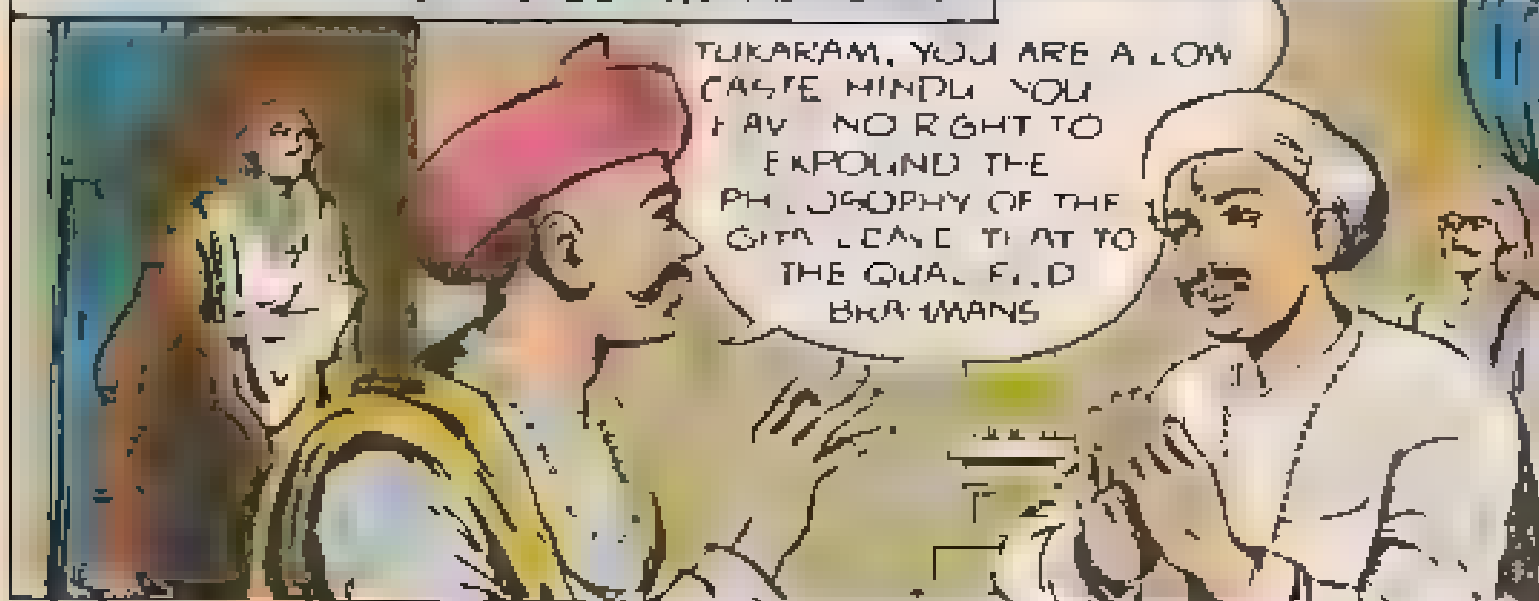
MAMBAJI HAD NO FEAR JUST SEIZING A CHANCE, GRABBED
A STICK AND RAN TO THE FEED



IN THE MEANTIME, HE HAD SEEN THAT THE COW HAD EATEN THE KIRTAN
TUKARAM SAID THAT HE HAD TRULY BECOME A SAINT



BUT MAMBAU WAS NOT HIS ONLY ENEMY ON DAY KAMESHWAR BHAT, AN ORTHODOX HINDU PRIEST, CAME TO HIM



THEN -



ON THE RIVER BANK



AN OLD MAN, RAMESHWAR BHAT, WAS
WASHING HIS FACE IN THE RIVER
WHEN HE HEARD A VOICE
SAYING TO HIM

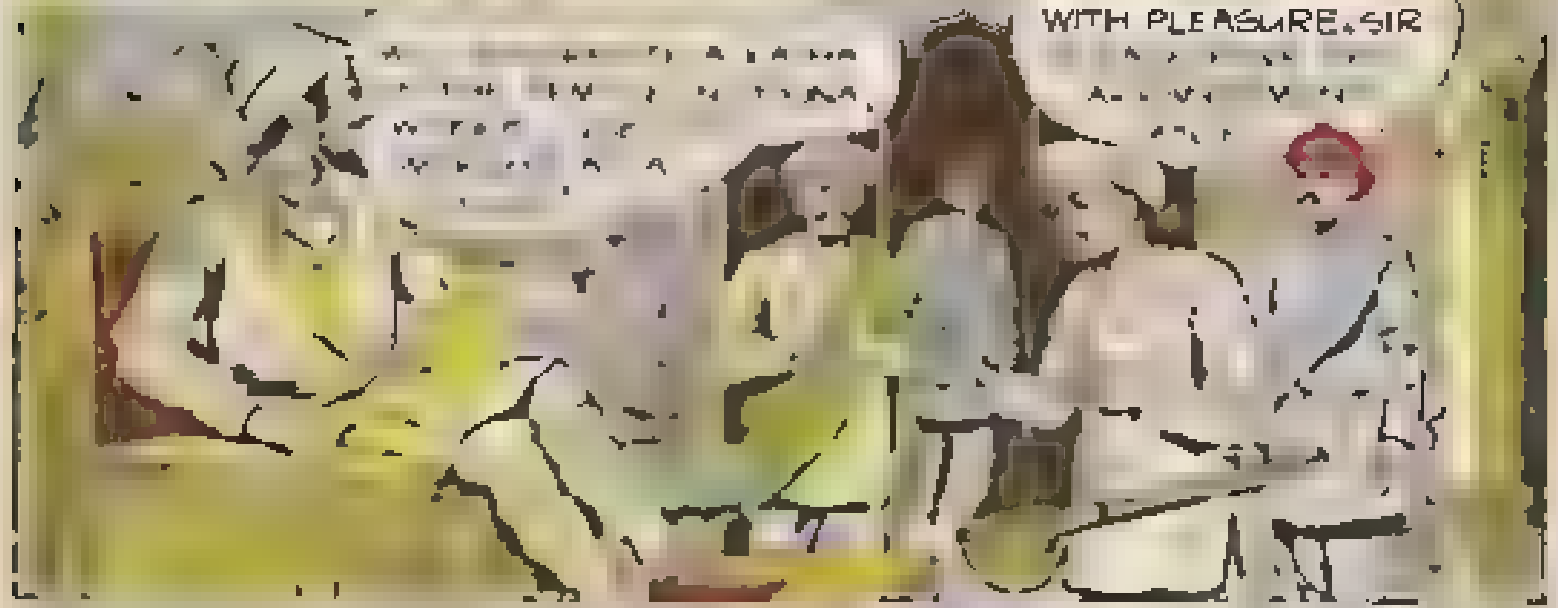


WHEN RAMESHWAR BHAT HEARD
OF THIS, HE CAME AND FELL



SHIVAJI BECAME HIS DISCIPLE. ONE DAY

WITH PLEASURE, SIR



I DON'T LET HIM GO
CATCH HIM

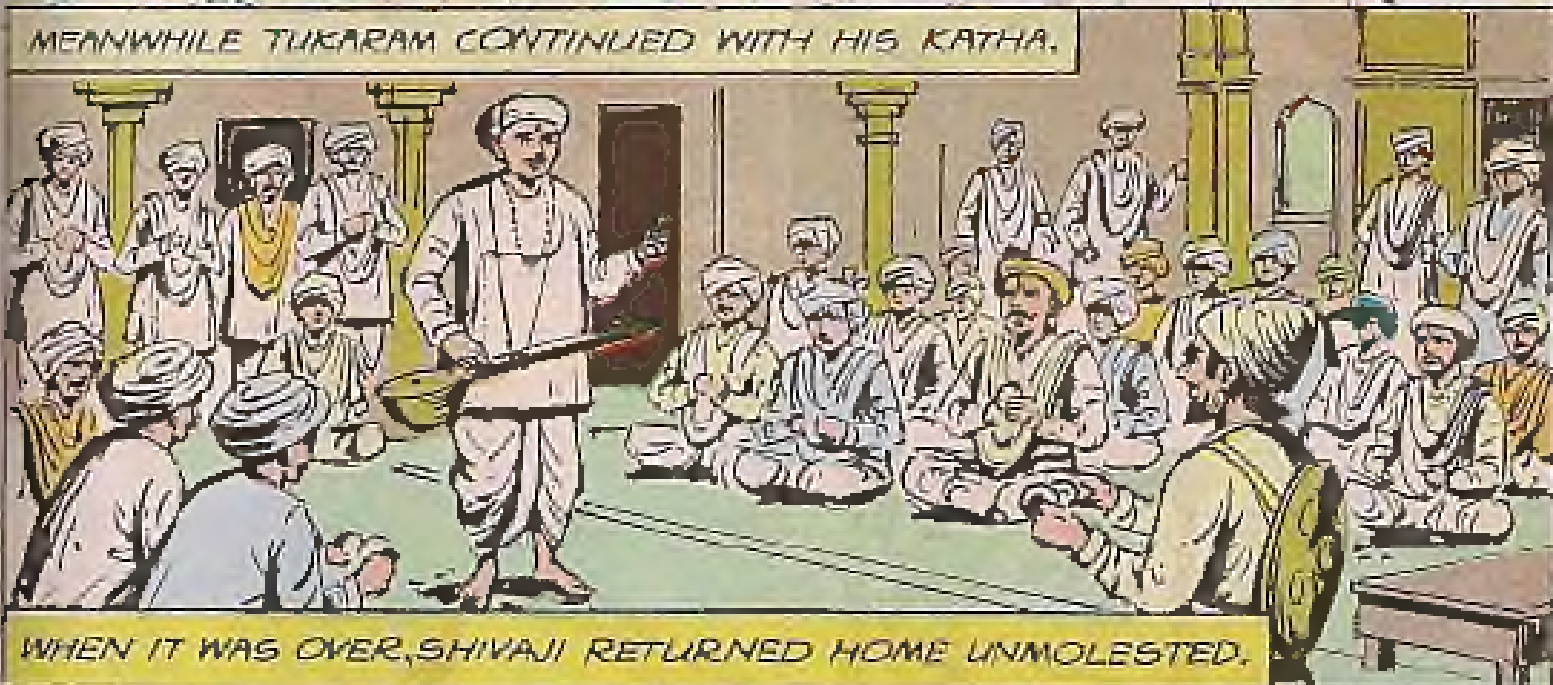


THEY GAVE CHASE BUT NEVER SUCCEEDED IN CATCHING HIM. FOR IT WAS WITHOBA WHO HAD ONCE AGAIN COME TO PROTECT HIS DEVOTEE.

I SHALL LEAD THEM INTO THE FORESTS, WHERE I SHALL DIS-
APPEAR. THAT WILL PERPLEX
THEM.



MEANWHILE TUKARAM CONTINUED WITH HIS KATHA.



WHEN IT WAS OVER, SHIVAJI RETURNED HOME UNMOLESTED.

TUKARAM TAUGHT AND PREACHED FOR MANY YEARS. THEN SUDDENLY ONE FINE MORNING -

AVALI, I HAVE COME
TO BID YOU
FAREWELL.
I AM GOING
TO VAIKUNTHA.



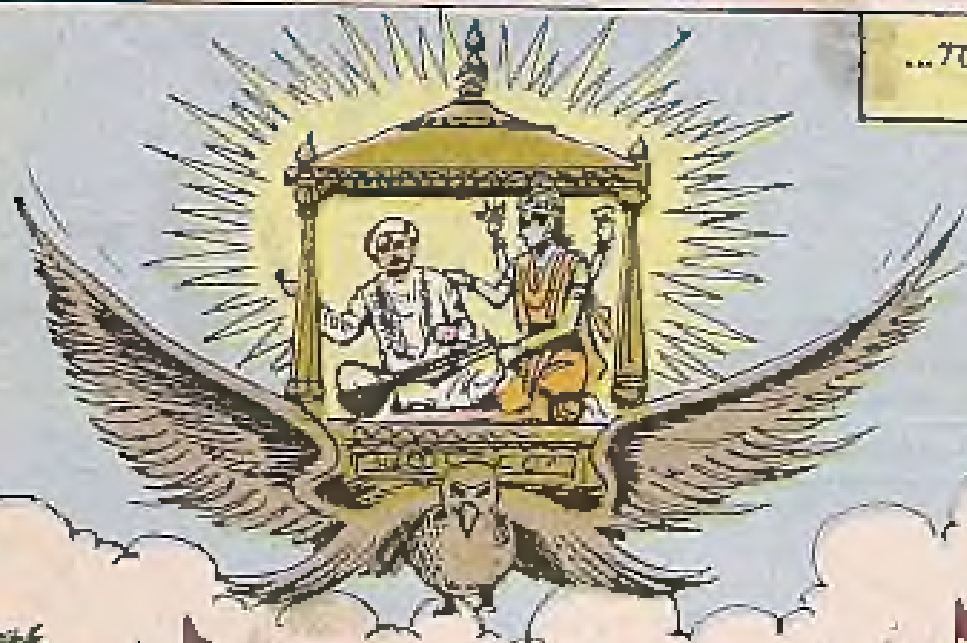
HE WENT TO THE BANKS OF THE
INDRAYANI AND ENTERING THE
WATER GAVE UP HIS BODY.



AS TUKARAM'S SPIRIT ROSE FROM
HIS BODY, SHRI VISHNU CAME IN
PERSON...



...TO TRANSPORT TUKARAM'S
SOUL TO HEAVEN.



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AMAR CHITRA KATHA titles?

CHHATRASAL
 PARASHURAMA
 BANDA BAHADUR
 PADMINI
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 RAM SHASTRI
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 ULGOPI
 BAJI RAO
 CHAND BIBI
 KABIR
 SHER SHAH
 DRONA

SURYA
 URYASHI
 ADI SHANKARA
 GHATOTKACHA
 TULSIDAS
 DURGADAS
 SUKANYA
 ANRUDDHA
 TUKARAM

OUR NEXT

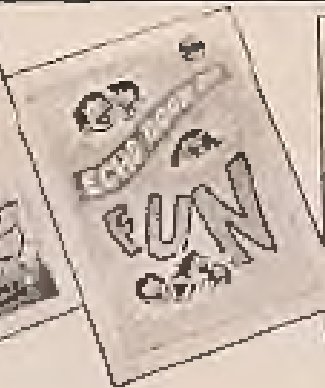
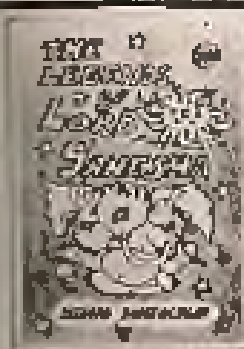
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AND AGASTYA
 BEGAN
 DRINKING
 THE OCEAN.



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for the earliest
correct entries!**

Ask for the new Chiclets Laugh 'n Chew pack. Each pack has, on its back, a side-splitting illustration that'll make you chew, laugh, laugh, chew, tear-off, collect. There are 30 illustrations.



1st prize



How to enter the Laugh 'n Chew Contest.

There are 30 different Laugh 'n Chew illustrations. Cut out all 30 and send them along with your name and address to Warner-Hindustan Limited, P.O. Box No. 8118, Bombay 400 025. The first 3 all-correct entries received will win fabulous Transistors and there are colourful Stickers for the next 500. So hurry up and get started!

By the way, 12 of the characters featured in the illustrations do not have any names. For example, do you know who's chewing Chiclets when he is not with Josepina? If not, ask your friends. That's an additional lot of fun from the Chiclets Laugh 'n Chew pack!



Remember, if you find lucky yellow Chiclets in your Laugh 'n Chew pack, ask your shopkeeper for another one.

FREE.